



# Transforming the Department of Ecology *Workplan* (Revised 8/1/04)

This workplan will guide the Department of Ecology's ongoing efforts to implement the following vision:

*The citizens of Washington trust that Department of Ecology employees will support and assist them in promoting the sustainable environmental and economic well-being of the state.*

The plan has four objectives:

- Improving the transparency of our permit processes;
- Improving the timeliness and predictability of permit decisions while maintaining quality;
- Developing a more helpful culture to improve customer service; and
- Exploring other methods to streamline processes and improve systems.

This workplan will change over time to reflect advice and suggestions received from the Regulatory Performance Advisors, Ecology staff and others.

## **Improving the transparency of our permit processes;**

1. Institutionalize pre-application conferences in Ecology's regional offices.
  - Develop uniform proposal (complete)
  - Pilot in Eastern and Southwest Regional Offices (complete)
  - Implement statewide (ongoing, starting in 2004)
2. Prepare permit process flowcharts/timeframes and application guidance material
  - Develop draft flowcharts for all major permits (complete)
  - Review flowcharts with Regulatory Performance Advisors (complete)
  - Develop uniform format for Web-based schematics (complete)
  - Make all schematics available on the web, including Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permits (complete)
3. Increase helpful information on the internet
  - Improve the Online Permit Assistance System (complete)
  - Update the System, including flowcharts/schematics (by program –complete)
  - Improve the Ecology Homepage for better access to permit assistance information (complete, but will continue)

4. Continue/improve the permit assistance call center
  - Act as agency point-of-contact for permit-related issues (ongoing)

### **Improving the timeliness and predictability of permit decisions while maintaining quality;**

1. Assess and resolve barriers to timely decision making
  - Identify and review case studies of major permits to determine factors for timeliness (complete)
  - Report results (ongoing)
2. Redesign business process for 401 certification
  - Launch the Breakthrough Approach pilot in Northwest Regional Office (complete)
  - Expand pilot approach to Southwest Regional Office (complete)
  - Implement and evaluate results (starting 2004)
3. Implement transportation permit streamlining opportunities w/ Department of Transportation
  - Draft multi-agency programmatic permit- Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) (complete)
  - Develop one-stop permitting at Ecology (ongoing-using the permit assistance call center)
  - Pilot Uniform Permit Binder approach (one project starting July 2004)
  - Implement joint phase 1&2 permit and revision of Highway Runoff Manual (ongoing)
  - Create Multi-Agency Permitting (MAP) Team in Bellevue (complete 03)
  - Work with the Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee (TPEAC) on programmatic permits for in-water work (ongoing)
  - Coordinate with Department of Transportation on Design-Build projects (begin July 04)
  - Develop web-based interactive permit pilot guidance with Office of Regulatory Assistance (begin April 04)
  - Coordinate with Department of Transportation on watershed based mitigation (began April 04)
4. Develop permit timeliness performance targets
  - Develop preliminary baseline data (complete)
  - Establish time frames for basic permit processes and set preliminary performance goals (complete)
  - Establish final performance goals (complete)
  - Implement tracking systems (complete...added Water and Air Quality in 2004)
  - Speed up water right changes/transfers (ongoing)
  - Report quarterly in Governor's Performance Agreement (started 1/03, ongoing)
5. Compare permit timeliness performance targets from other states
  - Research Web-based and other information (on hold)
  - Develop preliminary report (complete)
6. Track and manage significant projects on an agency-wide basis.

- Develop spreadsheet/database for automated tracking/reporting ( due 8/04)
  - Complete and keep updated (ongoing)
7. Provide on-going project coordination and management for significant projects.
    - Implement Office of Permit Assistance (ongoing)
  8. Improve Ecology's use of cost reimbursement agreements to expedite environmental permitting.
    - Expand to other permit processes beyond water rights (ongoing).
    - Report regularly on contract results (ongoing)
    - Fine tune Cost Reimbursement process for increased effectiveness ( complete)
  9. Explore process improvements with state and federal agencies
    - Meet with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) leadership (complete)
    - Develop regional permit streamlining pilots with EPA and (begun 04)
    - Meet with Corps of Engineers leadership (complete)

**Develop a more helpful culture to improve customer service; strengthen our effectiveness and improve our results**

1. Confer with Regulatory Performance Advisors
  - Develop membership list (complete)
  - Develop agendas (ongoing)
  - Receive feedback and suggestions on regulatory improvements (ongoing quarterly, since 2002)
2. Establish a Code of Conduct to support a helpful approach from Ecology employees
  - Develop Vision and Code (complete)
  - Adopt, and actively employ, employee expectations for customer service (complete and ongoing)
  - Meet with agency managers (complete 2002)
  - Present to all-staff (complete 2002)
  - Follow-up on questions and comments (complete)
  - Adopt 10 Key Strategies (the "Hows") for being successful in our work (complete)
  - Conduct Leadership Conference for all managers/supervisors (completed 10/03)
  - Collect "Success Stories" as examples of applying 10 Key Strategies and Service Principles (ongoing)
3. Evaluate and manage individual performance
  - Complete annual evaluations (complete annually every fall)
  - Develop Individual Training and Performance Plans (complete annually every fall)
  - Use Essential Functions, Code of Conduct, and Customer Service Expectations for establishing individual expectations and evaluating performance (ongoing)
  - Assess manager's success in institutionalizing a continuous improvement culture in their programs (ongoing)
  - Develop program specific goals, strategies, and measures (ongoing)

- Conduct Performance Management Training for managers (ongoing since June 2003)
  - Provide Performance Evaluation training for staff and managers (start Spring 05)
4. Develop survey tools to solicit external feedback from customer whom we regulate
    - Complete survey of permit customers (initial survey complete; round 2 due 9/04)
    - Hold program specific focus group sessions for environmental and advocacy groups (ad hoc)
  5. Implement a “Plain Talk” pilot in one or more of our environmental programs
    - Pilot in one program (completed March 04)
    - Plain Talk Team working on several projects (Team formed April 04 – work ongoing)

### **Explore other methods to streamline processes and improve regulatory systems.**

1. Learn from other experiences with regulatory reform for “exportable” features
  - Invite Renton to speak w/ agency managers (complete)
  - Review and compile information from other agencies and states (on hold)
  - Develop LEAN Manufacturing Permit Streamlining pilot project with Boeing (begun March 2004)
2. Look for innovative approaches to work with business as alternatives to traditional regulatory programs
  - Build skills that will help our staff to develop an understanding of the needs of stake holders - business knowledge/awareness and “economics”
  - Develop agreement with EPA on the National Environmental Performance Track program to partner with businesses in getting better environmental results (Memorandum of Agreement May 04)
  - Assess potential regulatory and financial incentives to work with businesses as a way to reduce environmental footprints (begun June 04)
3. Solicit other ideas and suggestions from staff, Regulatory Performance Advisors and others
  - Outline suggested next steps in streamlining and improving approaches to successfully performing our work at Ecology; ask Regulatory Performance Advisors Group for their input (meet 12/04)
  - Respond to the Joint Legislative Audit Review Committee (JLARC) on it’s effort to recommend multi-agency permit streamlining improvements (Sept 04)